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Elimination of racism and racial discrimination

Letter dated 24 September 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to your note transmitting the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Committee on Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to the General Assembly (A/53/269), I would like to draw your attention to paragraph 17 of the report in which there is an incorrect description of the situation in Norway. It is therefore necessary to dispel the false impression the Members of the United Nations have been given by this report.

To equate the second largest party in the Norwegian Parliament with neo-fascism and neo-Nazism, using terms like "extreme right parties advocating xenophobia, attacks on ethnic, national and religious minorities, and racial or ethnic purity" is incorrect. It is a grave factual mistake to list the Progress Party among examples of resurgence of neo-fascism and neo-Nazism. The Special Rapporteur refers to studies published by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. The study of the European Commission on Norway contains relevant information and opinions on the struggle against racism and intolerance, which is also fought in Norway. The study does not contain any reference to the Progress Party.

Furthermore, in the report of the Special Rapporteur it is maintained that the Progress Party obtained 22 per cent of the votes and 41 seats during the last elections, which is not the case. The correct numbers are 15.3 per cent and 25 seats in Parliament.

As you are well aware, Norway strongly supports the efforts of the United Nations to seek stronger implementation and increased respect for human rights. The offices of the Special Rapporteurs are valuable and important instruments in this regard. Their work provides an important platform for debate and follow-up on human rights obligations. It is of utmost importance that the reports of the Special Rapporteurs are accurate and truthful.

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I would request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 108 of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ole Peter **Kolby**
Permanent Representative